

Council for Labor & Economic Growth
Quarterly Meeting
Detroit Marriott Renaissance Center, 5th Floor, Detroit, Michigan
Tuesday, September 9, 2008
1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Wilma Abney	Eric Gilbertson	Daniel Phelan
David Adams	Doyle Hayes	Gene Pierce
Lizabeth Ardisana	John Hernandez	Hubert Price, Jr.
Paul Arsenault	John James	Trenda Rusher
Stephen Balbierz	Eleanor Josaitis	Jaye Shamsiddeen
Paul Bergan	Janet Joseph	Kester So
Lloyd Bingham, Ph.D.	Jumana Judeh	Marjorie Sorge
Ted Blashak	Thomas Kimble	Mary Thornton
Matthew Chambers	Karen Kosniewski	Mitch Tomlinson
Keith Cooley	Frank Lopez	John Voorhorst
Jennifer Cornell	Timothy Nelson	Cindy Warner
Bradley Dyer	Sharon Parks	George Yost
Michael Evangelista	Sharon Peters	J. Michael Zelley
		Lynn Zuellig

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Derick Adams	Fern Espino	Jack Litzenberg
Ismael Ahmed	Mike Flanagan	Alan Low
Senator Glenn Anderson	Senator Judson Gilbert	Shelly Norman-Hill
Kenneth Baker	Patrick “Shorty” Gleason	Janet Olszewski
Harry Bonner, Sr.	Norma Hagenow	Sharon Rivera
Patrick Cannon	Dennis Hands	Michael Schmidt
Representative Ed Clemente	Tom Hickner	John Van Wyck
David Eisler	Representative Bill Huizenga	William Peterson
James Epolito	Robert Jacquart	

I. WELCOME/OPENING REMARKS

Ms. Marge Sorge, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m., welcomed Council members, and provided a few opening remarks. Ms. Sorge acknowledged newly appointed CLEG member President Eric Gilbertson, of Saginaw Valley State University, who was appointed by the Governor in June; and offered congratulations to CLEG members honored at the Michigan Works! Conference that preceded the meeting: Mike Flanagan received the MWA Partnership in Excellence Award; Paul Arsenault an Honorable Mention in the Ralph Loeschner Outstanding Service Awards; and Mike Zelley was honored for his years of service to the Michigan Works! Association.

II. ACTION ITEMS

The action items on the consent agenda include approval of the following:

- June 9, 2008 quarterly meeting minutes
- Acceptance of DLEG-LMISI Work Products
 - ~ PY 2007 Workforce Information Core Products & Services Annual Report
 - ~ PY 2008 Workforce Information Core Products & Services Grant

A MOTION was offered by CLEG member Matt Chambers, and SUPPORTED by CLEG member Sharon Peters to approve the consent agenda action items.

II. DLEG INITIATIVES UPDATE

Liza Estlund Olson, Director of DLEG's Bureau of Workforce Transformation, gave a progress report on the first year of No Worker Left Behind, discussed the new Green Jobs Initiative, and provided an update on the National Career Readiness Certificate.

No Worker Left Behind

NWLB represents a complete reorganization of Michigan's workforce programs, and is part of an overall strategy to transform Michigan's economy. NWLB epitomizes Michigan's fundamental strategic decision to stress meaningful training rather than reemployment.

After its launch, DLEG worked in partnership with Michigan Works! agencies, community colleges and universities, and Michigan employers to make the NWLB vision a reality. In the program's first 11 months, more than 31,000 people were enrolled in NWLB training programs; and soon Governor Granholm will announce the precise first year enrollment figures.

This summer, NWLB's first year was celebrated with events around the state – some with Gov. Granholm, Lt. Gov. Cherry, DLEG Director Keith Cooley and Deputy Director Andy Levin -- highlighting inspiring stories of NWLB students and their employers.

Ms. Estlund Olson talked about the national media coverage of NWLB and how the successful partnerships will serve to strengthen other workforce/training activities as we move in to NWLB's year two and beyond.

Ms. Estlund Olson extended much gratitude to CLEG members for their efforts in helping NWLB succeed in this first year, thanking those who wrote letters to the editor, called legislators, and testified in appropriations hearings. It helped the vital work of building public and legislative support for NWLB.

Earlier this year, the state legislature recognized and rewarded our success, reaching a bi-partisan agreement on the state budget that gives NWBL \$15 million in GF/GP dollars for the upcoming fiscal year.

The Big News for NWLB Year Two: The Green Jobs Initiative

At the one-year anniversary event in Traverse City this past July, the Governor announced the creation of The NWLB Green Jobs Initiative. The Green Jobs Initiative is a \$6 million effort to support employers and training programs for jobs in designated alternative energy/green jobs industries.

The Green Jobs Initiative will build and support employer-based regional skills' alliances, to determine the training needs of businesses in emerging green industries. The Green Jobs Initiative will provide funding to community colleges to build their capacity to deliver the needed green jobs training. And, the Green Jobs Initiative will target NWLB training dollars to individuals seeking training for identified in-demand and emerging green industry sectors.

CLEG's Industry Sector committee has been invited to join the Green Jobs Initiative Blue Ribbon Advisory Group (similar to ALWG and Low Wage Worker committee) to help guide this effort.

MI National Career Readiness Certificate (MI NCRC)

Ms. Estlund Olson thanked CLEG committee members for their hard work in developing the recommendation that Michigan adopt a NCRC, which was approved at the last CLEG meeting. She reported that DLEG is committed to making it happen.

She announced the formation of a departmental workgroup that will develop the policies and guidelines to implement the rollout of the statewide NCRC; and she introduced Stephanie Beckhorn, who will serve as the NCRC team leader. Other team members were recognized as well.

The NCRC Team consists of people familiar with the various aspects of DLEG's work that will be important to the success of the NCRC in Michigan. This will be a partnership of DLEG, MWAs and others – including organizations already working hard to establish the NCRC in their regions.

IV. GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS COMMITTEE PROJECT FINDINGS

Ms. Marge Sorge, Chair of the Global Competitiveness Committee thanked the staff of this committee, Rick Waclawek, Carole Sorenson, Jacob Bisel, Jeff Anderson, and Kathy Stocking, for their work in putting together the presentation of their findings.

The Global Competitiveness Committee's charge was to develop clear metrics about the comparative position of Michigan workers in a global context. Ms. Sorge's presentation focused on ten measures from the three general categories of overall economic performance; Gross Domestic Product and Human Capital, Knowledge Economy and Education and Skills:

- GDP
- Young Knowledge Workers
- Youth Migration
- At-Risk Jobs
- Knowledge Industries
- High-Tech Industries
- Knowledge Transfer
- H.S. Graduation Rates
- Educational Attainment
- STEM Degrees

The next steps;

- Review results within committees
- Input for executive committee strategy planning
- Propose these measures to the committees as a tool to assess CLEG's work

CLEG should now consider questions such as; does the past, present and future work of each committee move the relevant needles in a positive direction? And, are there other measures that can be tracked to show others how our work is supporting Michigan's workforce strategy?

The Executive Committee is preparing for a strategy planning session next month, and the analysis in this report and your feedback will be important inputs in that process.

During a Q & A session, observations and comments include the following:

- 1) It was requested that a cost be studied or determined in the process/plan to bring the high school graduation to 95%.
- 2) The data reported is good and the fact that we are measuring is appreciated, but a concern is that when measuring a percentage of the population getting a high school diploma or tertiary education is that it ignores the fact of the raw numbers in comparison to other countries like China and India; just in raw numbers it compares us on a scale that we cannot comprehend. So as we do our work, we need to keep that in context, not just from a percentage standpoint, but also in a raw number standpoint.
- 3) We have developed a framework for ourselves that says high school should take four years. But we have many students who realize too late that they "checked out" too soon, and don't have a way to easily get back in to get that high school diploma. The cohort we are seeing is the 16 to 21 year old who doesn't have a high school education and now wants to go back and get it. These thoughts will be addressed more in the adult education/learning group work.

- 4) It was suggested that while looking at input for the executive committee strategy to remember to look to the Michigan Works! System as a source of input, as well as other partners such as Focus Hope, Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) and more.

V. Action Item

Setting State Adult Learning Policy – Presentation and Recommendations from the Low Wage Worker Advancement Committee/Adult Learning Workgroup

Mitch Tomlinson, Chair of the Low Wage Worker Advancement Committee (LWWAC) talked about the charge of the (LWWAC), the role of the Adult Learning Work Group (ALWG), the Regional Forums held and gave an overview of what the report provides.

The ALWG gathered data about current infrastructure; researched current and projected need; learned about promising practices for system redesign; and engaged a full range of stakeholders in conversations about improving adult education opportunities and supporting Michigan's adult learners, including more than 200 attendees at seven forums around the state.

The ALWG hosted seven regional forums around the state with the intent to learn about current offerings and best practice models, while also providing practitioners and stakeholders the opportunity to share their experiences and concerns.

From these forums emerged the following general themes:

- Collaboration and partnership is important
- The needs of the learner must be the priority; programs must be responsive to employer needs
- Accountability is necessary
- Contextualized, relevant learning is most effective
- Need to create a culture of lifelong learning
- Need to be innovative in program design and delivery

Mr. Tomlinson stated that today's reports will; 1) provide context for change, on the national, state and local levels, 2) outline what transformation must look like, and 3) get feedback and adoption of the concept.

Mr. Tomlinson introduced Whitney Smith from the Joyce Foundation and Julie Strawn from the Center for Law and Social Policy, who are both experts on Context for Change at the national level.

Mr. Larry Good, Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, talked more about the work done by the committees and served as moderator for the first panel presentation with Whitney Smith and Julie Strawn, "National Context for Change."

Ms. Smith talked about an initiative called Shifting Gears that was launched in 2006, which focuses on increasing and improving the employment outcomes of low-skilled and low-income adults. She reported that half of U.S. workers have high school diplomas or less and we don't have a system set up to take these workers to an education level acceptable to fill the many unfilled jobs that require more than the high school diploma and less than a four-year degree. Jobs today require adaptive, problem solving skills that are not being gained with just a high school diploma or G.E.D. It is imperative that post secondary education be available to adult learners and that systems be put in place to serve this population.

Ms. Strawn added that a logical response is to reform our school systems, but two-thirds of the available workforce for the next 20 years, are beyond the realm of K-12 education. Our current potential pool of adults need post secondary education.

Ms. Strawn further reported that there are three key trends to pay attention to as Michigan tries to offer basic skills services to adult learners;

- 1) Accountability – how do we use data strategically where our current system is failing? Build in goals and incentives.
- 2) Employment Goals – we have to help the people in need of higher education figure out what their employment goals are so we can create effective education programs. Integrating workforce development and post-secondary education is imperative.
- 3) Support Success – financial aid, child care services and transportation assistance are obstacles in the way of some low-income adult learners.

Ms. Smith discussed the collaboration piece of the project. She reported that many participants in the business sector and governmental agencies have come together to provide services and support the programs that deliver contextualized learning to those adults seeking training and post secondary education.

Ms. Strawn talked about a study done in the State of Washington, which found that a person receiving post secondary training needed about a year to obtain a certificate or credential that would make a difference in their job/earning status and this period of time and education attainment came to be called the “tipping point.” Follow-up of this study found that very few students who started in the program ever made it to the tipping point (only about 5% who started out in basic skills and even less in those who started in English as a Second Language (ESL) programs). Due to this finding an expansion of the IBEST (Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training) program was launched. The IBEST program provides the adult learner with training in reading, writing, math or ESL integrated with occupational training for a specific job. The IBEST program is completed in one to three academic quarters; and upon completion of the program the participant will have earned a credential with college credits while bringing his/her basic skills in ESL up to the point where they are ready to enter the next step in the pathway. IBEST programs must be linked to local employers and provide an occupational program with a track record of placing people in jobs that pay a certain level and must prove that they support student success in order to receive state approval. The IBEST program’s curricula is co-created by people from adult basic education, ESL services, as well as the technical faculty, which provides for a team effort in the creation of the curriculum.

Mr. Good asked Ms. Strawn to discuss the meaning of accountability when talking about what the state can do to use accountability as a lever regarding funding sources and program outcomes. Ms. Strawn reported that typically data collection is just a compliance activity rather than a strategic planning innovation activity. The compliance activity asks what is a program accomplishing, program by program. But students, workers, and people are not programs, they are individuals who move through a variety of programs and need funding from a variety of sources. She answered Mr. Good by stating that if all we ever do is track data on a program by program basis, we never know what difference we are making for the individual. So we need to be able to track individual progress across agency services, over a period of time; and then track that individual into the labor market and by tracking individuals, we can ask, “did the programs provided make a difference?” Accountability is being able to answer these questions about what difference are we making for people, and then being able to translate that into setting goals for programs and rewarding programs for meeting goals.

There was discussion about innovation and the need for continuous innovation in the programs for adult learning and advancement into the labor markets.

Ms. Smith discussed transformative change and talked about the steps in moving toward this kind of change. She referenced a Harvard Business writer, John Cotter and his writing about transformative change at the firm level. Ms. Smith has found his writing to be very applicable to system level change, and mentioned his book about why transformation efforts fail, which is very instructive, and in which stating a very clear communication strategy is urged. Ms. Smith reported that in order to change fundamentally at the local level so adult learners are getting better services, we must have a broad based coalition motivated around an urgent cause which is clearly articulated and continue to communicate how the problem is going to be solved.

Mr. Good reported that when the Adult Learning Work Group first met, Andy Levin requested two things of them as they do their work; these requests were 1) don't complain about the lack of money; and 2) don't live in silos. The group has done an amazing job of maintaining this request throughout all of their work sessions.

Julie Strawn and Whitney Smith took questions from the audience.

Q: Ms. Smith was asked to discuss an initiative regarding men recently released from prison, and the Michigan Prisoner re-entry program results to date.

A: Ms. Smith reported that there is currently a large scale research demonstration looking at employment programs that serve men coming out of prison and what works in terms of increasing their attachment to the labor market and reducing recidivism. There are four demonstration sites, one of which is in Detroit. The lead partners are Good Will Detroit and the Michigan Department of Corrections. However, the findings won't be out until early 2010, as we are following the men in the labor market for over a year to see how they do and if the employment impacts diminish or not.

Q: In the five state initiative, what measurable outcomes are being used to determine success or non success in employment retention and wages, and is a component of this to look at the employers in the areas where you are trying to show changes to see if they perceive an increase in the quality of workforce available to them and is that having a positive impact.

A: Ms. Smith reported that there is an evaluation underway. The goal is to increase the number of workers that get post-secondary credentials. Most of the states are trying to increase the number by reforming their adult and remedial education systems, however, most states are not tracking the basic data that is needed to answer some of the questions. The first two years have been spent helping the states build data warehouses, build the appetite to answer these basic performance measurement questions because they are not federally regulated. We don't have an employer survey as part of the evaluation, but as part two of our initiative we are considering an employer engagement strategy working with businesses around policy change and getting business more engaged in the reform efforts.

Mr. Good thanked Whitney Smith and Julie Strawn and he introduced Marcia Black-Watson of DLEG as moderator for the next panel presentation.

Ms. Black-Watson discussed the forums and work done by the Adult Learning Work Group. She talked about the three goals for this process, which included to make a case for change in each region and in each local community, and to hear of the best practices across the state, to not duplicate effort and to determine what the needs are for the different areas of Michigan.

Ms. Black-Watson asked the panel members to introduce themselves. The Michigan Context for Change panel included, Elaine Wood of Northwest MI Council of Governments; Matt Chambers of Three Rivers Health; and Lena Barkley of CVS Pharmacy.

Ms. Wood gave a presentation about the Northwest Michigan Workforce Development Board's new way of providing adult basic skills services and talked about the process used to develop the new model. Transition to post-secondary training is a focus in all the programs as well as private sectors needs.

Mr. Chambers talked about the importance of transforming the adult learning infrastructure so that it is possible for working adults to access the resources and earn credentials and basic skills to improve their earning potential.

Ms. Barkley discussed how CVS is dealing with basic skills issues among their employees and potential employees. She reported that an employment mapping system was developed to provide training and continued learning to provide the credentials needed to advance to higher level positions in the company.

Advice offered to Michigan from this panel on what Michigan needs to do to continue to improve adult learning included:

- 1) policy accountable to business; and
- 2) flexibility for the adult learner with a support system

Sharon Parks, Chair of the Low-Wage Worker Committee served as moderator for the final panel presentation; the New Michigan Adult Learning Strategy. The panel included Sharon Parks, Michigan League for Human Services, Robert Matthews, Mott Community College, Katie Wolf, Michigan Association of Community & Adult Education and Adriana Nichols, Michigan Community College Association.

The Michigan Adult Learning Strategy panel reviewed the process, current landscape, scale of need, strategic intent, guiding principles, impact of transformation and a plan for moving forward.

Mr. Matthews discussed the process used by the group in their study. They broke into four groups; 1) defining the need, 2) mapping current programs, 3) employer concerns, and 4) strategy design. Mr. Matthews added a special thanks to the CSW group for their support in the project. He further reported that an outcome of this first phase of work produced a Strategic Intent and seven Guiding Principles.

Ms. Parks talked about the current landscape and the startling scale of need. She reported that one in three Michigan working-age adults (ages 18 to 64) – 1.7 million people, lack the basic skills or credentials to attain family-sustaining jobs and contribute to the state's economy. She pointed out other deficiencies in our adult learning population, and reported that the detailed information can be seen in the complete report.

Ms. Nichols outlined the seven Guiding Principles outlined during the study and discussed the relevance of each of the principles which include; Collaboration, Accountability, Responsiveness, Agility, Contextualization, Entrepreneurism, and Alignment. As she described each of the principles, and delivered a clear message that providing relevant information, contextualized learning as well as a delivery system that is tailored to the adult learner will be imperative as we develop training programs for success in increasing the skills needed to obtain family sustaining jobs.

Ms. Wolf discussed the importance of the impact of transformation. With a successful transformation some of the benefits will include; 1) higher personal incomes, 2) higher rates of citizenship and civic engagement, 3) higher levels of educational achievement for future generations, 4) higher levels of fiscal contribution, and 5) high levels of readiness for careers in the new economy.

Ms. Wolf added that there is a great promise and potential to accomplish the transformation recommended and in moving forward this can improve our state's global competitiveness, employers' prosperity, and workers' abilities to succeed in the ever-changing economy while working together toward being a leader in lifelong learning and economic prosperity.

Observations and comments during a Q & A session include the following:

- 1) The point was made that the group of workers who are 50 years and older, still have much to offer, so we were asked to not eliminate the people who have been in the work world for a long time. Retired teachers are a wonderful resource as well as those with higher education and years of experience.
- 2) The speed in which the system can respond to the adult learners needs is very important. The program is working and the barriers are minimal and for that the observer was very grateful and offered much thanks.
- 3) The group was thanked for the work they have done to put together the presentation, the work that went into the study, and the goals put forth for the future.

Marge Sorge asked the council to entertain a motion to support the recommendation of the committee.

A MOTION was made by CLEG member Matt Chambers, and SUPPORTED by CLEG member Lloyd Bingman to approve the recommendations and guiding principals presented. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT/CLOSING REMARKS

Ms. Sorge offered the opportunity for public comment. A member of the public referenced a study that claims life expectancy is extended by obtaining a college education and suggested that information from this study may be helpful to the work of the committee.

Council members were encouraged to fill out the evaluations to aid in the development of future meeting agendas. The next CLEG meeting is on Monday, December 8, 2008 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., at the Lansing Community College MTEC.

There being no further business, Ms. Sorge adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the information in these minutes will be made in alternative format (large type, audio tape, etc.) upon request.

Approved December 8, 2009